Volume LXXXV No. 14 January 13, 1967 30 cents

# commonweal

ST. CHARLES
JAN 13 1968
CARTHAGENA

# OH, WHAT A LOVELY DIALOGUE

**The Catholic Marxism of *Slant***

*Peter Steinfels*

• • • • • • • • • • • • • •

## THE ABSOLUTE FUTURE

*Michael Novak*

## THE MAN ON THE TIGER

*J. M. Cameron*

A-78238 12-67
ST CHARLES SEMINARY LIB
CARTHAGENA STATION
CELINA OHIO 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NEWS AND VIEWS

*Perspective*: The change in Friday abstinence for Catholics was voted the top religious story of 1966 by the Religious Newswriters Association.

•

William Randolph Hearst the lesser instructs the Pope on righteousness and Vietnam: (from his Dec. 11 column):

"For a change, I had little to say [upon meeting the Pope]. But on one subject I did voice an opinion and found unanimity of thought and belief. Peace, I maintained, can never be gained by a surrender of principles, or a flight from the field of righteousness. Freedom, I suggested, is a God-given right and to yield on that point, simply to achieve a cease-fire or a 'negotiation' would be suicidal not only to the victims of such a deal but, eventually, to all of us."

•

Sequence of events: 1) George P. Mahoney, perennial candidate for anything in Maryland, appealed to the white backlash in running for governor last November on an anti-open housing platform ("Your home is your castle"); 2) Msgr. Joseph Gallagher, executive editor of the *Baltimore Catholic Review*, wrote a widely quoted article in the *Review* saying that he could not in conscience vote for Mahoney; 3) Heavy protests and financial threats rolled into the chancery as a result of the Gallagher article; 4) Msgr. Gallagher is no longer with the *Baltimore Catholic Review*.

Msgr. Salvatore Adamo, writing in *America*, declared a cause-and-effect relationship between the protests and Msgr. Gallagher's departure. Someone named A. E. P. Wall said in behalf of the *Review* that it wasn't so. Msgr. Gallagher said, enigmatically, that the Adamo article was "not substantially incorrect," but that "in no sense was I forced out" at the *Review*.

Last September we reported that Msgr. Gallagher and the *Review* were put under wraps on the Vietnam issue for a time, after heavy pro-war protests greeted Cardinal Shehan's moderate pastoral on Vietnam. In a letter to *Commonweal*, Msgr. Gallagher more or less denied it. Cardinal Shehan was moved to "clarify" his pastoral by explaining that he supported the war.

•

What does the far right dream about in its most secret fantasies? We think the study should begin with *The Spirit of '76*, a right-wing novel that will shortly be a best-seller among little old ladies in tennis shoes. A conservative vice-president, picked to balance the ticket, becomes president after an assassination. The new president ("a *real man*" according to the book's ad copy) is in South America at the time, and refuses to come back until he has economically blackmailed the assembled Latin American delegates and led the bombing raids on Cuba (dropping the first bomb himself from his own plane). This is OK with the electorate, but he is impeached (unsuccessfully) for vetoing a pork-barrel bill.

In the subplot, we discover that a Lippmannesque columnist is a weak-kneed slanderer of a mild-mannered head of a far-right organization, who has been named to the Presidential roundtable along with the president of Notre Dame. We also learn that a David Lawrence-type columnist has more moral fiber than the Lippmannesque weakling, but cannot find love with a liberal girl reporter because of the ideological gap.

The conservative President is such a wow (particularly after dropping tear-gas bombs from his plane on unruly White House demonstrators) that he is frequently compared to Caesar. He therefore decides not to run again, thus showing that he is not. The nation looks on in horror as a Kennedyesque family looks like it will take over for the Democrats, but the Republicans win again with a Taft-like Republican who was unknown until he boarded a Russian trawler, wrestled its captain to the deck, and stripped the vessel of its missiles for Cuba.

The ad copy asks, is this book "Just A Dream, Or A Prophecy?"

One vote here for dream.

•

Last year in Manhattan, there was some talk of easing traffic jams by rerouting the St. Patrick's Day parade, and the other ethnic parades, from Fifth Avenue onto the Central Park roadways. The discussion provoked this article in the current issue of the *National Hibernian's Digest*:

"Preparations for the big St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York for 1967 are presently way ahead of their usual time schedule. This early work on parade arrangements is due to the extraordinary intense interest which was stimulated last September and October among genuine Hibernians when hostile forces endeavored to practically destroy the parade. . . . Their plan, then, was to persuade the mayor of the City of New York, who heads a new administration which took office in 1966 and is of a different political party than its predecessor, to use his executive power in this controversy and issue an edict. . . . This aggressive opposition, alternately active and dormant since 1934, is basically composed of atheistic Communists and their active fellow travellers who preach that God is dead. Their vindictiveness to the parade springs primarily from the fact that it is a 7-hour public demonstration on New York City streets which positively indicates belief in God, loyalty to the United States, patriotic reverence for the stars and stripes and respect for Irish tradition."

•

Was the bishops' recent Vietnam statement ambivalent? Not to Father Daniel Lyons, S.J., columnist for *Our Sunday Visitor*. He demonstrates (Jan. 1) that the statement was a rebuke to peaceniks and an endorsement for a policy of absolute victory in Vietnam. He goes on to show that it's our no-win policy of seeking negotiations, and not the war itself, that is immoral.

JOHN LEO



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CORRESPONDENCE

### *Marriage Meeting*

Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

*To the Editors*: John Leo's comment on the inter-disciplinary marriage meeting in Washington, D.C. in your November 25th issue is but another of the typical statements which foment confusion among the laity on the matter of birth control.

As a participant in the sessions and as a member of the A-E sub-division of the 525 at the general sessions, I can say no poll was taken on whether the present Church norms could be considered to be in a state of doubt. The contrary was made quite clear to all, especially by Father De Riedmatten (note the correct spelling of his name!).

A poll was taken in this sub-group of social workers, doctors, marriage counsellors, psychiatrists, canonists, *and* theologians on whether they favored a change in current legislation on contraception. The vote was 63-3 in favor.

What John Leo hopes to gain by innuendos and false reporting on so delicate a matter as birth control at this particular time, I fail to see.

(REV.) THOMAS L. CAMPBELL, C.S.C.

### *LBJ in Australia*

East Setauket, N.Y.

To the Editors: "The Johnson Visit" by Niall Brennan (Nov. 25) was a blatant attempt at double character assassination by misstatement and exaggeration. I wonder if its printing in *Commonweal* was prompted by a desire to present a responsible *minority* dissent or because it conforms with your views that President Johnson can do almost nothing right!

Mr. Brennan's pique and pettiness need not be detailed as they came through loud and clear, even to Prime Minister Holt's celebrated photograph with three bikini-clad young beauties. Too bad he failed to add that the young ladies were all members of the Prime Minister's immediate family. Too bad he also failed

*(Continued on page 410)*

**NEWS & VIEWS: 390** **CORRESPONDENCE: 391**
**EDITORIALS: 391**
***THE MAN ON THE TIGER:*** *J. M. Cameron* **394**
***THE CELIBACY EXPLOSION:*** *James O'Gara* **396**
***OH, WHAT A LOVELY DIALOGUE:*** *Peter Steinfels* **397**
***THE ABSOLUTE FUTURE:*** *Michael Novak* **400**
**VERSE: 399**
***THE STAGE:*** *Wilfrid Sheed* **402** ***THE SCREEN:*** *Philip T. Hartung* **403**
**BOOKS: 404**

**EDWARD S. SKILLIN:** *Editor* **JAMES O'GARA:** *Managing Editor*
**DANIEL CALLAHAN:** *Associate Editor* **JOHN LEO:** *Associate Editor*
**PETER STEINFELS:** *Assistant Editor*
**ANNE ROBERTSON:** *Editorial Assistant*
**WILFRID SHEED:** *Drama Critic* **PHILIP T. HARTUNG:** *Movie Critic* **JOHN FANDEL:** *Poetry*
**ROBERT BARRAT:** *Paris* **GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN:** *Rome* **J. M. CAMERON:** *Great Britain*
**JOHN BRUBAKER:** *Advertising Manager*

*COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
*Second-class postage paid in Philadelphia, Pa. Printed in the USA and published weekly, except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and from mid-July to mid-September, by Commonweal Publishing Co, 232 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016*
*MUrray Hill 3-2042.* *Copyright © 1967 Commonweal Publishing Co, Inc.*
*US and Canada, $9 a year. Foreign $11. Single copies 30¢*

# CARDINAL, POPE AND WAR

According to Vatican protocol, a Pope almost never issues a public criticism of a bishop. This is all the more true of a cardinal, an honored member of the papal family. Yet the profusion of "high Vatican sources" dissociating the Pope from Cardinal Spellman's Vietnam statements clearly add up to a rebuke—or as close to a public rebuke from the Pope as a cardinal is likely to receive.

That the Pope would go this far—against the background of elaborate papal courtesy in regard to bishops—is a measure of Paul VI's dismay at remarks that clearly undercut his peace efforts in Vietnam. The Pope—to his great credit—is apparently willing to use every ounce of his moral influence to achieve a Vietnam settlement. To that end, he has tried in various ways to tamp down the kind of chauvinism and demands for "total victory" that Cardinal Spellman produced in Vietnam. While one can sympathize with Cardinal Spellman—he is 77 years old and has never once in his life drawn a papal frown for thumping chauvinism—it is easy to see that the Pope's seriousness of purpose demands that he do more than look the other way when the superpatriotism he deplores is paraded under the Church's official banner.

One of the "high Vatican sources" tried to excuse Cardinal Spellman by saying that the Vietnam remarks were understandable, since the Cardinal is the military vicar of U.S. forces. Translated, this would mean that all we can expect from a Catholic chaplain is drum-beating for his own side in any war. This is an appalling excuse, but one that is descriptively accurate. In the history of the Church, no national hierarchy has yet discovered its government indulging in an unjust war. The Spellman remarks, and the inability of the U.S. hierarchy to put forth much more than earnest ambivalences about the war, suggests that the actual function of a hierarchy's moral consideration in wartime is merely to provide one more nationalistic sanction for what the government has already decided. The historical record of episcopal irrelevance in considering concrete questions of peace and war is a strong reason why the Pope must speak out strongly himself. It was, after all, the failure of the German hierarchy in World War II that turned the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spotlight on Pius XII and created the kind of expectations that ultimately produced "The Deputy."

Several American bishops—most notably Cardinals Shehan and Cushing—have lately tried to put a check on runaway patriotism. But the efforts of the hierarchy have been feeble. Not one bishop was even venturesome enough to support the Pope's call for an extension of the holiday truce. Not one has seriously questioned the morality of the war itself, or gone half as far as the Pope. Not one has had anything to say thus far on the heavy civilian toll from U.S. bombing in the north reported by Harrison Salisbury in the New York *Times,* though even *L'Osservatore Romano* has hailed these Salisbury dispatches as a service to truth.

Although the Pope, like U Thant, has a certain freedom by not being a partisan, like Thant he is not as free as Americans to point out American failures. Thant, in his "if-Americans-only-knew-the-truth" speech, made it clear that he hopes to communicate directly to the American people and get Americans to act. If the Pope has the same thing in mind, his efforts thus far have been a failure. No significant segment of American Catholicism has been awakened by the Pope's pleas to stop the killing. Most Catholics, like their bishops, are divided into superpatriots or dazed bystanders who admit Vietnam is a great moral issue but seem to have nothing much else to offer. One thing they could offer is the suggestion that this is a stupid, barbarous war and that it must be liquidated as quickly as possible.

## ANTI-ARMS RACE

Anti-novel, anti-hero, and now anti-missile. We might as well get used to the term; it is here to stay. Thanks to anti-missiles, the United States and the Soviet Union are about to start off on a new arms race. It will be very costly; it may be very dangerous. There is almost no chance it can be stopped.

The deployment of a Soviet anti-ballistic missile defense system (ABM) has set off this new rivalry; on November 11, Secretary McNamara officially confirmed the Soviet action. Previous to this, of course, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been promoting a U.S. ABM system —and finding Congressional allies to the extent of a $168 million appropriation for development of the Nike-X, a grant made against McNamara's advice. But generally McNamara has resisted this pressure, and Washington evidently asked Moscow for a moratorium on ABM deployment. Unfortunately, Mr. Kosygin, whose reasons for opposing ABM ought to be as strong as McNamara's, has not done so well with Marshal Malinovsky and the Soviet counterpart of the Joint Chiefs. Now President Johnson has the unhappy choice of matching the Russian initiative with an American one, or exposing himself in '68 to the charge of being careless with national security. LBJ is certain to recall Kennedy's success with the "missile gap." Should he not, there are plenty of ABM promoters in the Pentagon and the missile industry to help him.

The question, then, is not really whether the arms race is going to escalate (it is), but how far and in what direction. Secretary McNamara still hopes to avoid plumping for any ABM system. Instead he offers the Poseidon missile designed to penetrate any Russian defense. Furthermore, the possibility that researchers may soon find a way to eliminate the need for nuclear warheads in an ABM system is another point for the McNamara position: why invest in impractical equipment which will be swiftly surpassed?

Johnson may not get away with these concessions, however, and may end up giving the go-ahead on a skeleton anti-missile defense. Such a system would be effective against Chinese threats of the near future; at least it would calm the hysteria which may result from China's emergence as a world nuclear power, (though, at $4-$8 billion, this is an expensive tranquilizer).

What is most important is drawing the line there, unilaterally if necessary. But an agreement with Moscow would certainly make the task easier. An offer of parity in defense systems should look good to the Kremlin: in an all-out anti-missile race with the U.S., Russia will be the loser. To stabilize the race at the level of matching skeleton ABM systems might be, in Moscow's eyes, a victory for the USSR. In fact, it would be a victory for common sense.

## RELIGION IN SPAIN

It has never been easy for Catholics in America to take a sympathetic look at the state of religious liberty in Spain. Not only has the Spanish tradition been fundamentally at odds with American theory and practice, but it has equally been at odds with the whole thrust of contemporary Catholic thought. That leaves little to be said in its favor, and nothing has ever occurred to us. Now the Spanish government has prepared the draft of a new "Religious Freedom Act" and has had it approved (with a few emendations) by the Spanish hierarchy. The final step, expected shortly, is discussion and action by the Spanish parliament.

So let us try, for a moment, to be sympathetic to the draft. In many ways, that is not hard at all. The draft has obviously been written with the Council's "Declaration on Religious Liberty" in mind. It generally affirms the right of non-Catholics to establish schools, churches and seminaries. It grants non-Catholics the right to civil marriages, burial according to their own rites, to the formation of their own educational, cultural and social associations. It "protects the right of individuals and religious communities to the diffusion of their faith, orally



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or in writing . . ." It grants the right of assembly for religious purposes, and the right of parents to decide the form of religious education for their children.

At some points, though, our sympathy is strained. While non-Catholics are granted new rights, they will have to pay a high cost in red-tape and government surveillance. All non-Catholic religious associations and organizations will have to be registered with the government, after first obtaining permission to exist at all. They will also have to keep a register of all their members (which may be "examined at any time by the governmental authority"), as well as detailed account books listing all donations, income and expenditures (which are to be submitted annually to the government). In addition, the right to religious assembly outside of registered places of worship will only be granted with advance notice and with the approval of the Civil Governor of the Province.

Finally, there are some points in the draft which elicit no sympathy whatsoever. Most of these bear on the favored place of Catholicism, which continues in full force in the draft. Most notably, the right to assembly outside registered places of worship may be denied "when it runs counter to the respect due to the Catholic religion," and the right of non-Catholic religious groups to propagate their convictions is actually left in a highly ambiguous state. To be sure, Spain is culturally Catholic. But when will it admit it that it is hardly free choice alone which explains this culture, but also a tradition of repressing all dissent?

## COMMENT

# The Davis Case

Roman Catholics like to tell the story of how John Henry Newman greeted the proclamation of papal infallibility with a toast to the Pope—but only after he had first drunk one to the inviolability of conscience. Yet no one drank a toast to British theologian Father Charles Davis last month when he unexpectedly announced his break with the church in the name of conscience. Those who admired him were shocked into silence. Those who didn't, offered convenient explanations.

The popular young theologian's own explanations for leaving the church were as direct and candid as any statements to the press can be under such circumstances. "I have come to see that the church as it exists and works at present is an obstacle in the lives of the committed Catholics I know and admire," he said. "It is not the source of the values they cherish and promote. On the contrary, they live and work in a constant tension and opposition to it. For me," he went on, "Christian commitment is inseparable from truth and concern for people. I do not find either of these represented by the official church. There is concern for authority at the expense of truth and I am constantly saddened by instances of damage done to persons by the workings of an impersonal and unfree system."

Predictably, there were those who chose to wink at Davis' stated dissatisfactions with the church and preferred to regard them as elaborate rationales for his plans to marry Florence Henderson, a 36-year-old student from New York. After all, he and Miss Henderson had been secretly engaged for nearly a year. Moreover, 43 is a dangerous age, even for celibate clergymen, and married priests are fast becoming commonplace in the Catholic church. But Davis anticipated this kind of reaction when he candidly acknowledged that "I don't think I could have broken from a system which I have been connected with since fifteen without feeling that there was something positive as an alternative."

There were others who tried to dismiss his break as a sudden failure of nerve, a collapse of faith in the ultimate triumph of the *aggiornamento* which he had served so well as editor of *The Clergy Review*. The London *Tablet*, for example, chose the high, safe grounds of history to refute Davis' judgment that the church "is a pseudo-political structure from the past (that is) now breaking up." On the contrary, the *Tablet* editors argued, the traditional church structure has survived greater schisms and stronger death notices before and "always there have been renewal and new expansion and the prophets disproved."

But there was little of the posturing prophet in Davis' public rejection of Catholicism. On December 4, he had already decided to leave the priesthood and the church, but he took eleven more days to rethink his position before personally informing John Cardinal Heenan of his decision. And only after consulting with his close friend, former editor Desmond Fisher of London's *Catholic Herald*, did he make his statement to the press.

Even so, reporters wanted to know more of the background surrounding his decision, and Davis obliged. No, he had not had a row with church authorities, nor did he consider his defection a "protest" against the institutional church. He said he still considers himself a Christian, rather than an agnostic or atheist, but he added that he had no intentions of joining another communion. "The only thing that makes me sad is the thought of so many people within the church who over the years turned to me and my writings for comfort and leadership. Although there are very good people in it, and I have had close communication with them," he continued, "it always seemed in spite of the church, alongside it, not through it." Davis said he retains respect for Catholics who feel they should try to reform the church from within, adding: "But others—including myself—are brought up so sharply and bluntly against what the church actually is



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that we could not do that . . . For me, the personal struggle is over. I know that this is what I have wanted to do and say for a long time."

Not an original thinker, Davis nevertheless possessed an extraordinary talent for interpreting continental Catholic theology in literate English, shaping the abstract and prolix into direct, concrete expressions of hope. His major interests were church structures and the sacraments, twin sources of Christian community. But somewhere along the line he was forced to face up to the gap between what he wrote and what he personally experienced. "I was concerned with finding the reality embodied in the sacraments," he explained, "not in saying the right words. The sacraments should have been a living experience. I did not find that. They should have been a human celebration, an enhancement of life. I had written about what they mean, but I found I was speaking in words, that the words did not correspond to my life."

This, certainly, is the most disturbing element in his apologia: the fact that a man who, in his work and presence, realized so well the possibilities of genuine Christian love and commitment within the church could cease believing in his own words long before he had ceased writing them. His admirers will read his latest book, just published in England, with the uneasy feeling of watching a dead performer on television. Some, surely, will experience a shock of recognition. All the new words, the emphases, the concepts we have learned to use in describing our faith will be there. How many will have the honesty to admit that so far the reality hasn't changed very much at all? KENNETH L. WOODWARD

---

*With this issue we welcome to our pages Michael Novak as a regular columnist. Assistant Professor of Religion at Stanford and the author of* Belief and Unbelief, *Mr. Novak will alternate with Daniel Callahan in a joint column to be called "New Directions."*

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

**FROM BRITAIN**

# THE MAN ON THE TIGER

The midwinter festival in Britain will be overshadowed by the miserable business of Rhodesia. It might have been worse. Ian Smith might have accepted the terms put to him on board H.M.S. Tiger, and this would have been much worse. It would have given effective power to Mr. Smith and his colleagues, even though there would have been formal safeguards against the postponing of majority rule; and it would have destroyed the Commonwealth. The honor of the Government would have been blasted and the heart would have gone out of the Labor party. Indeed, as the Labor party begins to grasp the magnitude of the concessions that would have been made to the Rhodesian Front under the tentative arrangements arrived at on the Tiger there may all the same be sobering thoughts about the leadership. It can be said with some confidence that Mr. Smith's acceptance would have provoked at least one important resignation, that of Mrs. Judith Hart of the Commonwealth Relations Office, and possibly others. One doesn't quite know what the breaking point is for Mrs. Barbara Castle or Mr. Anthony Greenwood; but it would certainly have been very near. The issue that would probably have been decisive for Mrs. Hart was that of the nature of the armed presence to guarantee the carrying out of the agreement. There is reason to suppose that when Mr. Wilson went off to Gibraltar to meet the rebel leader he had in mind as one of the necessary conditions for a satisfactory agreement a British military presence in Rhodesia (as in Cyprus). In the course of the negotiations this was changed into something quite different: that the existing armed and police forces in Rhodesia should be made legally responsible to the Governor; they would thus, in a purely legal sense, have become the armed forces of the Crown. Now, these forces are composed of men all of whom have supported, actively or passively, the dictatorship of the Rhodesian Front and disregarded, once already, their legal obligations to the Governor. To suppose that they would have supported legality in the event of the proposed Royal Commission of Inquiry's recommending the rejection of the draft Constitution, on the ground (for example) that it was not wanted by native Africans, is to entertain a fantasy. It would be about as likely as the carrying in triumph through the streets of Oxford, Mississippi of Dr. Martin Luther King by the State troopers.

The most puzzling character in all this is Mr. Smith himself. He must have known very well that what he was offered by Mr. Wilson went far beyond anything he could have hoped for. He was being offered independence *before* majority rule, on condition that he went through one or two rituals that only the most extreme members of the Rhodesian Front could have found intolerably humiliating, and that he was bound to a program of African advance that could in the event have been slowed down to a speed imperceptible to the naked eye. There are two conflicting accounts of what occurred on the Tiger. But it seems reasonably clear that Mr. Wilson was under the impression that Mr. Smith had plenary powers to negotiate a settlement; that it then began to look as though he hadn't been trusted to use such powers, although he was personally behind the Wilson line for a settlement; and



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that shortly before the end he began to betray qualms about the method of implementing the settlement. Even then, it is clear to those who saw the demeanor of Mr. Wilson when he got back, that he thought the chances of a settlement good. This can only mean that he had some reason to suppose that Mr. Smith was himself prepared for this settlement, and that the doubt arose over Mr. Smith's courage or ability to overcome the certain opposition of such racialists among his ministers as the sinister Mr. Lardner Burke and the blimpish Lord Graham. In the event, Mr. Smith capitulated. The story from Salisbury now is that the rejection of the terms was unanimous from the beginning. This seems inconsistent with the many hours the Rhodesian cabinet was in session before our Prime Minister received the emphatic no that so distressed and angered him.

The conduct of the Conservative Opposition has been unbelievably disgraceful. They had placed themselves in a morally impossible position. The father of the 1961 Constitution rejected by Mr. Smith when he proclaimed the UDI was Mr. Duncan Sandys himself, a Tory by no means on the left of the party. In words they have condemned Mr. Smith, though they have been excessively delicate in their choice of language. But by tolerating unrebuked in their ranks such apologists of white supremacy as Lord Salisbury, Mr. Patrick Wall and Mr. John Biggs-Davidson, and by nourishing a certain rage against the Prime Minister, who day after day in Parliament contrives without much effort to make Mr. Heath, the Leader of the Opposition, look exceedingly foolish, they have now put themselves in the position of being defenders of Mr. Smith, who (it is implied) is really anxious for a settlement and with patient negotiations, presumably to the Greek kalends, can be brought to a settlement. They will not admit that it is Mr. Wilson who has prolonged negotiations beyond what was reasonable and that Mr. Smith and his colleagues are quite determined to maintain indefinitely the present distribution of racial power in Rhodesia.

As to whether selective mandatory sanctions can dislodge the Smith regime, this is a hard question to answer. Presumably South Africa will disregard any U.N. requests or commands. It will follow then that either the supply of oil to South Africa and to the Portuguese colonies must be severely reduced, and this might need to be enforced by a naval blockade, or the passage of oil from South Africa must be stopped, and this would involve the bombing of roads and railways leading from the Union to Rhodesia. Mr. Wilson has already made it plain that he wants at all costs to avoid a confrontation with the whole of Southern Africa. What then is the point of sanctions? This is the deadly question the Government seems unprepared to face. It is this radical uncertainty over what the real aims of Mr. Wilson and his colleagues are that accounts for the suspicion and hostility of some of the, at bottom, rather friendly African states. If selective sanctions weaken and irritate Rhodesia without changing the internal power structure, then Mr. Smith (or whoever succeeds him, for his vacillations on board the Tiger may count against him) and his colleagues have only (they may argue to themselves) to hang on for a few years until some other catastrophe shifts attention away from Rhodesia or until a Tory Government comes to power in Britain. In this matter one suspects that the Labor Government has no long term *aims* as distinct from *wishes*. The aim is to survive, economically and politically, from month to month and from year to year. There must be many of them, though probably this doesn't include Mr. Wilson, who may regret the failure to undertake, right at the beginning, a sharp police action against the rebels. The Rhodesian forces would then have been seriously split and a great many would certainly not have taken up arms against the Crown. But Mr. Wilson not only decided against this course; with inconceivable complacency he informed Mr. Smith that in no circumstances would he use armed force to dislodge the regime. What in the long history of Britain has always been used without hesitation, and sometimes with gusto, against Irishmen, Cypriots, Egyptians, Palestinian Arabs and Jews, native Africans, Chinese Communists in Malaya, Indians, could not be used against the white settlers of Rhodesia. Mr. Wilson reported, with genuine sorrow and anger, that at the Commonwealth Conference he had been called a racialist. The charge is certainly unjust; but he ought not to have been surprised that it was made.

Christian opinion, as represented by the British Council of Churches, has been against Mr. Smith and in favor of a stiff Government policy. No Catholic bishop supported in public the statement of the British Council. Indeed, no Catholic bishop has to date opened his mouth on the subject. This is traditional and characteristic. At the time of Suez, for example, no Catholic episcopal voice was heard. One expects that quite soon some of the newer men will break with this tradition. How conservative and pre-conciliar in their general attitudes some of the older bishops can be may be best brought out by a quotation from a recent message to his clergy by Bishop Ellis of Nottingham, by way of preface to the season of good will. "Non-Catholics are always welcome in our churches, but we do not pray together in their churches, not even during the Unity Octave, nor do we join in carol services in their churches." Fortunately, it is not necessary to end on so disagreeable a note. Dom Christopher Butler, the Abbot of Downside, the outstanding British prelate at Vatican II, has been appointed an auxiliary bishop to Cardinal Heenan, with special responsibility for Hertfordshire. This seems to mean that he will be in charge of what is in effect a pilot scheme for a new type of smaller diocese. This is the best piece of news English Catholics have had for a long time. It represents a triumph for the liberal policy so ably represented here by the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Cardinale.

J. M. CAMERON



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

# THE CELIBACY EXPLOSION

There was a brief flurry of publicity about the *National Catholic Reporter*-Father Joseph Fichter celibacy report, but I'm not at all sure it has yet received the attention it deserves. Almost six thousand questionnaires were distributed to "non-pastors and non-monsignors," and more than half of those questioned responded—a very high response for a one-shot, self-administered questionnaire.

I called the summary of the results a celibacy-report, and in fact almost everyone concentrated on this part of the findings. Actually, though, there were other interesting things. Lay people tend to forget that priests have problems all their own—problems to which very often no one pays any attention. In line with this, for example, a full ninety percent of the priests polled by Father Fichter think every diocese should have an elected grievance committee to which priests could bring their complaints. (The Archdiocese of Detroit, headed by the newly elected president of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop John F. Dearden, already has such a personnel commission.) More than half of the priests polled feel there is little or no communication between them and their bishops, and more than 60% think that their bishops show little personal interest in them. In the face of often huge and depersonalized dioceses, I don't know the answer to this one, but if I were a bishop I would worry about it.

The Council produced a lot of talk about seminary reform and some action. There is no telling how this has affected the attitude of priests, but the Fichter report indicates that if they were given the choice over again, only 12% would begin their studies for the priesthood in a minor seminary. One out of seven would hesitate to enter the seminary at all.

The biggest news was on the celibacy issue, though. Out of the cross-section of rank-and-file priests surveyed, 62% believe that diocesan priests should have freedom of choice between marriage and celibacy. Very significantly, most of the priests who favor such freedom think the choice should be open before and after ordination. Almost one-third (31%) either probably or "unquestionably" would marry if permitted by the Church (although Father Fichter reported that one priest said he didn't see how any priest could answer the question without committing grievous sin). In spite of this, 54% thought that a married clergy would be less effective in parish work than a celibate clergy.

It is unfortunate but true, I think, that a certain bitterness has crept into the celibacy discussion. I missed an installment or two in the running debate, but I gather from priests and at least one bishop I have talked to that a couple of the critics of celibacy managed to impugn the manhood or the emotional balance of the presently celibate in the course of the discussion. No man, celibate or not, likes that.

In the same way, it does not seem to me that the discussion should involve an attack on the idea of celibacy itself. The ideal of consecrated virginity goes far back in the Church, and the real issue is not the abolition of celibacy; it is whether celibacy should be an indispensable requirement for ordination to the diocesan priesthood. Religious life with its traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience would remain; the question is: in the matter of celibacy should the life-mode of the diocesan priest in the Western Church be patterned after religious life? Everyone knows that in recent years more and more theoreticians have been saying 'no' to that question; the startling thing about the *Reporter*-Fichter survey is that it shows for the first time that more than 60% of the responding priests agreed.

A good, brief view of the whole problem can be had in Sheed & Ward's *Priestly Celibacy and Maturity* by a New Zealander, David P. O'Neill. Father O'Neill is not against celibacy; on the contrary, he takes a very exalted view of it. He believes, however, that too many secular priests do not really accept celibacy but simply take it without question as part of the price of ordination. Unlike monks, secular priests are ordained precisely to minister to the world, and one question now raised is whether celibacy interferes with that secularity, that work in the world, for which the parish priest is ordained.

Father O'Neill wants to strengthen celibacy by providing alternative forms of ministry. He thinks the Council-approved married diaconate might be expanded; he wonders if the office of catechist could be enlarged. Most of all, he thinks celibacy should never be chosen by anyone aged 21 to 25 but only by the mature and the prepared. This would mean postponing ordination, which would then allow deacons to serve in parishes while making up their minds whether to embrace celibacy and the priesthood or to continue to serve the Church as married deacons. In any case, however, celibacy should always represent a free decision; Father O'Neill thinks a priest who changes his mind about celibacy should be allowed to marry and continue to exercise his priesthood.

In short, Father O'Neill and the majority of American priests surveyed by Father Fichter simply do not regard celibacy and the priesthood as being in any sense inseparable. This may well be the wave of the future, but for a long time to come I suspect that millions of Catholics will find the idea very hard to get used to. JAMES O'GARA



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# OH, WHAT A LOVELY DIALOGUE

*The Catholic Marxism of* Slant

**PETER STEINFELS**

"All right, Steinfels," began Mahoney at lunch last week, "how about a little Catholic-Marxist dialogue?"

"Well, okay," I replied, stabbing a dill pickle. "Who'll be the Marxist?"

"Your turn," he said. "I did it last time."

I was doubtful. "You know I'm not strong on economics. Exploitation, sure. But falling rate of profit and labor theory of value? As for sociology and class relations, I've barely even cut my teeth on C. Wright Mills."

"Come off it, Steinfels. That's the *old* Marx. It's the Young Marx we do now. No economics. Just alienation, humanism, that sort of thing. As for sociology, you've read *Dombey and Sons,* haven't you?"

"When I was sixteen."

"That'll do. Why some of these English Catholic-Marxist dialoguers don't even need Dickens. They can dissect modern capitalism with three sentences from D. H. Lawrence."

"Okay, I'll give it a try."

"You lead off," ordered Mahoney, taking a deep breath.

I led off: "Classless society."

"Kingdom of God," he replied.

"Alienation," I said.

"Sin," he shot back.

"Reification."

"Idolatry."

"Socialist solidarity."

"Liturgical community."

(We were really into it now.)

"Division of labor."

"The Fall."

"Mystification."

"Benediction."

"Neo-capitalism, bourgeois reformism and liberal-democratic paternalism."

*"Aggiornamento,"* Mahoney shouted gleefully.

"I'm sorry," said the capitalist bourgeois waitress standing unseen by his elbow. "We're out of that today. Perhaps you'd like some hash."

The foregoing fantasy, exaggerated and unfair, is my visceral reaction to about five months of reading material by what is known as "the *Slant* group." *Slant* is a bi-monthly journal, originally a publication of Cambridge undergraduates, but now very much graduated and on its own. Currently it seems to be the center of attention of England's Catholic Left.

And rightly so. There is no question that *Slant* is something different in the English-speaking Catholic world. Its intellectual roots are in the brilliant socialist theorizing of Raymond Williams and the *New Left Review*. Its tone is brash, and its commitment is straightforward: "Christians can never be conservatives or liberals or even right-wing socialists; they must fight capitalism as evil; they must align themselves, perhaps, with all those traditional enemies of the church, left-wing socialists and atheistic Marxists."

This statement comes from *Catholics and the Left* (London, Sheed and Ward), a collection of essays planned and published as a *"Slant* Manifesto." If the book is ultimately a disappointment, it is still an invigorating exercise. The shock value of its trenchant opposition to capitalism is alone worth the price of admission. And in taking its cue from Marx, *Catholics and the Left* bids farewell both to that conglomeration of documents known as papal social teachings and to the medie-

PETER STEINFELS *is an Assistant Editor of* COMMONWEAL.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

val socialism of Belloc, Chesterton and the *Catholic Worker*. At last the Industrial Revolution may get its due.

*Catholics and the Left* is not the only book to spin off from *Slant,* however. *The New Left Church* (Baltimore, Helicon) is the work of a *Slant* founder and editor, Terence Eagleton. Eagleton has his own particular interests, as does each of the writers who appear in *Slant;* yet a collective theme can be extracted. The essential Christian task is to create human community. The Christian cannot be satisfied with either neo-capitalism or the welfare state because neither overcomes the forms of alienation so thoroughly investigated in Marx's early writings. Only some form of genuine socialism will suffice, though precisely what *Slant* writers mean by socialism is pretty vague, outside of some elementary considerations of workers' control. The Church is to be "the sacrament of socialist society": both a revelation of its possibility and a catalyst for its achievement. In practical terms, this means a radical reworking of all theology, an abolition of geographical parishes and separate schools, and a total democratization of the clergy including the disappearance of the priesthood as a specialized "occupation" outside of the liturgy and the election of priests and bishops. Martin Redfern sums it up, in *Catholics and the Left:* "the socialist movement, and the goal of a socialist society, provides a meaning—the only possible meaning—for the Christian understanding of the contemporary historical situation and the goal of Christian history." For a radical Catholic, the "liturgical community of the church is the sacrament of socialism . . . a living example of . . . a classless, fully human, socialist society in process of evolving out of an alienated, dehumanized, capitalist society."

### *A Disappointment*

It is obvious that proposals like these can be nothing but stimulating for the Church. The fact that one English Catholic writer finds them so dangerous that he suggests their dissemination among university students ought not to be permitted only shows how badly such views are needed. What, then, makes *Catholics and the Left, The New Left Church,* and *Slant* in general a disappointment? Take one statement of the *Slant* project, given by Neil Middleton, director of London's Sheed and Ward and a *Slant* executive editor: "Its job is to explore the whole question of the living relationship between the Church and revolutionary politics." Now the Church you will find, and revolution too, at least in a rhetorical sense; but politics are about as prominent in the *Slant* group's writings as rosary meditations and storm novenas.

Less than a third of the articles in the last four issues of *Slant* are at all specifically political, that is, concerned with the actual political, social and economic relations of particular societies at particular moments. The rest deal (often very well) with Church affairs, theological-philosophical issues, or literary questions. *Catholics and the Left* follows the same recipe: one part talk about capitalism and its shortcomings to two parts talk about the Church and theology. *The New Left Church* is even less political. Virtually every argument, whether for the adoption of a Marxist viewpoint or for change in the Church, is built around an example from literature and begins with an exercise in literary criticism.

When political comment does appear in *Slant* writings, it may be good or bad, but it is almost always derivative. The critique of capitalism in *Catholics and the Left* is borrowed whole-hog from the argument of the *New Left Review*. When measured against the real thing, the book *Towards Socialism* (London, Fontana), put out by the *New Left Review* editors themselves, the *Slant* critique looks like a very amateur piece of work. *Slant* political interpretations are consistently footnoted to a small group of British left-wing socialist publications and seldom to primary sources of political facts. *Slant* writers show little familiarity with the non-Marxist currents of modern radical thought or with the more cogent criticisms of Marxism. The evidence suggests that the *Slant* group has made a rather superficial, *a priori* act of faith in the politics of Britain's New Left, and then has dedicated itself to its first and real love—philosophical and theological exploration. Writing in *Worldview,* Brian Wicker, another contributor to the *"Slant* Manifesto" confirms this; he describes the British Catholic Left as "still so 'catholic,' so much an in-group of people with an eccentric interest in the one subject that most other left-wingers feel is finished with—theology."

In short, despite all the talk about commitment to the world, the *Slant* group is repeating a typical Catholic pattern of behavior: enthusiasm for the speculative and the general, to the detriment of the concrete and the specific. A lonely little Gross National Product or sociological finding seldom raises its mundane head among the discussions of reification, Berthold Brecht, liberal paternalism, and worldly Christianity. *Slant*-ers write commentaries on Marx and quote him incessantly, as though they had simply found a new man to plug into the old St. Thomas thing. Karl Marx called 19th-century Christian socialism only "the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heartburnings of the aristocrat." Perhaps he might find *Slant's* Christian Marxism only the metaphysical foam on the Wave of the Future?

Of course, *Slant's* concentration on the philosophical and theological, leaving the specific analysis of political and economic events to other socialist journals, could be justified as an efficient division of labor. But division of labor, as every Marxist knows, is a dangerous, two-edged phenomenon. The particular danger the *Slant* group is running involves a growing gap between the fervor of its language and any concrete political realities this language might be referred to. Rhetoric, freed from the restraints of hard facts, escalates.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How far it can escalate is illustrated by an article in the most recent (October/November) issue of *Slant*. "Prompted by a reading of *Combat Liberalism* by Mao Tse-tung," the author, Mr. Middleton, warns *Slant* readers that "we shall have to take great care not to become, in the classical sense, 'revisionists' " since "we have all without exception, by education, taste, and habit, become bourgeois." Summoning up a vision of the destruction of the bourgeois world, entailing "our own destruction too," Mr. Middleton goes on: "We are only playing at being dedicated to this revolution" and must "ask ourselves all sorts of questions before we get over this stage and become fundamentally serious." (Then, evidently becoming fundamentally serious, he quotes a few passages from Mao.) After pointing out that "it is easy enough to talk revolution in the abstract," the author poses some questions which I presume he imagines are concrete: "Do we seriously believe that we are going to stop the western (and here I include Russia, but of course exclude China) exploitation of the third world *without* violence? . . . And when, as I think it inevitably must, violence comes to the comfortable bourgeois west, are we going to withdraw because it is dirty?" Mr. Middleton answers his own questions: "Violence is evil, but it is not of our choosing; it has been forced upon the world by the capitalist bourgeoisie, and for us to advocate non-violence is to fall into their liberal trap and to help maintain the status quo."

The jargon has a nostalgic charm (the author's Marxist formulations are so primitive as to qualify him as some sort of ideological Grandma Moses); and all that talk about violence may speed up the reader's pulsebeat. But what is one to think of the whole performance? To suggest that getting fundamentally serious simply means a general readiness to shoulder a gun implies that all the other problems have been resolved. Violence for what? And where and when? And with and against whom? These questions are taken for granted. The good guys and the bad guys are all satisfactorily sorted out. ("I include Russia, but of course exclude China." Why, *of course,* Mr. Middleton.) As for the complexities of industrialization and economic development, subjects *Slant* barely treats at all, the author deals with them by tossing off a few chestnuts about "socialist struggles" and Western exploitation. He means to be concrete; but he is as abstract as ever. He wants to stop playing at revolution; in this article anyway, he is merely playing a little harder. He is searching for a revolutionary stance; what he has got is a pose.

Will all of the *Slant* enterprise tend in this direction? The same question can be justly asked of much of the other Christian-Marxist dialogue currently being undertaken. Will it simply involve a lot of experimentation with Hegelian terminology and an identification with another tradition which appears less sullied than the Church's? Will its "commitment to the world" merely consist in a generalized heightening of tension and a lengthening series of dramatic pronouncements?

These dangers can be avoided if *Slant* and the dialogue move on, just as Marx himself did, from the philosophical and religious criticism of the 1840s to a detailed and specific critical analysis of contemporary social, economic and political institutions. Had Marx died in 1844, today he might be considered one of the more interesting of the Young Hegelians. It is only because the later Marx was what he was, sociologist, economist, revolutionary, that the earlier philosopher Marx is so significant.

Furthermore, although the early writings are rich in insight, they obscure precisely what Catholicism needs above all: the kind of profound respect for the "material base" that makes one sit all day in the British Museum examining government documents, that makes one hesitate to pronounce on, say, Russian economic development until, like Marx, one first has "learned Russian, and for many years studied the official publications." (Marx's 1877 Letter to *Otechestvenniye Zapiski.*) In their own *aggiornamento,* the world's Communist parties are much in need of the humanist Marx of the early writings. But Catholics, especially Catholics of the left, could do with a large dose of the hard-headed later Marx whose respect for fact and low tolerance of stirring rhetoric cut through the mystifications of capitalists and socialists alike.

Marx determined to turn to economic questions when, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung,* he found himself embarrassed by his inability to debate such specifics as the forest laws of the Rhine Diet and the conditions of the Mosel peasant. The *Slant* group shows a similar inability. I hope they feel a similar embarrassment. Perhaps, then, the results will be as fruitful.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

CAROL JOHNSON

### *ART (Before a painting of Pisanello, Verona)*

Real figures in imaginary space:
The Principessa listens and the Saint,
with head averted, listens, and the hounds
and stallions ruminate. The citadel
whose sugared battlements encroach floats up.
The fluted sail of a small boat bells out,
as two hanged men in the near distance lend
indifference to this quiet scene.
Such art
so qualifies its silences we catch
at the same substance in the mind or heart.
Authority is Wanting—so to serve
the body's paradise with spirit's nerve.
'Embrasse-moi' is not murmured by the woman.
'Approche-toi' is not uttered by the Saint.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE ABSOLUTE FUTURE

MICHAEL NOVAK

American Catholics down the years have committed grievous sins of rabid anti-Communism. Consequently, one of the main imperatives of Catholics at present is to puncture the popular myths, biases, and prejudices about Communism that distort American political debate. On the international scene, the time has come for Christians and Marxists, no longer merely to ignore or to destroy one another, but to learn from one another and to criticize one another. The shedding of one another's blood is useless, the ignoring of one another is empty.

One of the main points at which the current dialogue between Christians and Marxists converges is the meaning of the future. Contrary to stereotype, Marxist philosophy is not materialistic in a Western sense; it hopes for a future in which men's capacities of imagination, decision and creative labor will be completely developed. Such a future may never, in fact, arrive; thus, the Marxist conception of the future might well be open. In that case, the function of the concept of future would be to provide leverage for criticism and reform of the present. *Secularia semper reformanda.*

At a recent conference of Catholics and Marxists in Austria, Karl Rahner defined Christianity in a perspective that might make sense to Marxists: "Christianity is the religion of the absolute future." Rahner's point is familiar to students of Reinhold Niebuhr. Christianity is eschatological; it refuses to call any present social arrangement final; within history, justice is never complete. Christianity refuses to idolize the present or the past, for its Lord is one who is ever to be awaited: "Come, Lord Jesus!" Christians are committed to building up the kingdom of God on earth, a kingdom of truth, liberty, justice and love. Since we do not yet have an international social order characterized by such values, Christians cannot very well rest upon what has so far been achieved; the pilgrimage is not over; there are many painful miles yet to march. *Ecclesia semper reformanda.*

Marxist thinkers have always had a predilection for one of the rather neglected Christian traditions, that of Joachim of Flora, the Anabaptists, and the Free Churches. The more established Christian traditions—Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist—have preferred to work in continuity with the institutions of the Holy Roman Empire. They have found it possible to work out various arrangements with emperors, kings, princes, and later with parliaments and economic corporations. They have operated on the assumption that there is a natural, created base for Christianity—a set of pre-Christian or religious or human values on which Christianity can "build." They have been more or less protective of the "moral fiber" of society, of its educational system and its family mores. They are proud of an entity they call "western civilization," which they think of as "Christian."

By contrast, Joachim of Flora preached a coming "third age" of the Holy Spirit discontinuous with the pagan institutions, laws, and orders of the past. Anabaptists and Free Churchmen regarded the classical Lutheran and Calvinist reformations as "halfway reformations," much too limited in scope. For under Lutherans and Calvinists, as under Catholics, the establishment of religion remained intact; the social and economic institutions of the pagan past were still being "baptized." Free Churchmen desired a less institutionalized, more voluntary, more demanding church. Their desires were so exigent that the future became a crucial category in their thought. Some of them used the future as escape from the present; but still more of them used it as a weapon of criticism against the present. They demanded an authenticity, an integrity, and a commitment that empowered many poor and simple people to stand firm against feudal and monarchical institutions, and to generate much momentum for change in Western society.

In American theological thought, Harvey Cox stands more nearly than any other in this tradition. It is not surprising, then, that Cox is the Christian theologian most sensitively attuned to the Christian-Marxist dialogue and the importance of the category of the future. In his rejoinder in *The Secular City Debate* (Macmillan, $1.45), in fact, he has promised us an approach to language about God through language about the future. Such an enterprise will be at the heart of the issue between Marxists and Christians. Since the basic notion seems sound, I would like to help the project along by voicing a few critical reflections.

In the first place, Marxist thought regards existentialism as a stage in the progressive decadence of the west. In the Marxist view, existentialism has not healed the split between thought and action which is the disease of western philosophy. Western philosophy is too "intellectualist"; it does not give sufficient weight to the fact that the role of thought is not merely to reflect the world, but



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to *change* the world. Again, it does not give sufficient weight to the fact that thinking is highly conditioned by social, economic, and other circumstances. Harvey Cox is not especially interested in epistemological questions, but he has been convinced by the Marxist critique that existentialism is a mere emotional retreat, a philosophy of inaction and Hamlet-like reflection, a disease of inwardness. Moreover, he has joined the Marxist critique of inwardness to Bonhoeffer's complaint about still another kind of inwardness: the concern and anxiety which German and Scandinavian religious thought has cherished as "the religious dimension" of man's subjective life.

Nevertheless, both for Marxist thought and for Cox, the source of thought which changes the world lies in the imagination, the projects, and the decisions of men. The future does not merely happen; men must invent it and take responsibility for it. For both, moreover, responsibility is not merely a factor of social conditioning; first one man must stand firm and then another—decision must well up from the strength of each individual. Otherwise there is no maturity, only docility, passivity, and conformity.

Existentialist emphasis on decision-making often seems to be too emotive and individualistic; even social relations are conceived on the model of eye-to-eye, deeply personal "encounters." With Marxist thinkers, Cox insists on the social dimensions and social realities of responsibility; much less than, say, Camus' Meursault in *The Stranger* will he allow a man to contemplate morosely his own emotional complexities. Does Cox at this point run the risk of evasion, promoting the reform of institutions because the reform of oneself is so difficult? There are some passages in *The Secular City*—particularly those on the "I-you relationship"—which read like the rationalizations of a busy, harried man. But to criticize Cox in this way would be to acquiesce in a dualism that is untenable. The individual and the social are not, in reality, separate; our language and hence even our private thoughts and our personal values are social phenomena. Cox is right to insist that maturity arises through social and political commitment. An accurate criticism, perhaps, is that he has not yet told us very much about how to choose among, or how to criticize, alternative commitments; he has merely announced where he stands.

But even at this point Cox's rejoinder in *The Secular City Debate* offers promise. "In our time the metaphysicians," he writes, "instead of integrating our lives for us, will probably more often challenge the premature integrations and cultural foreclosures that constrict us. . . . Our task today is to transmute the answers of classical metaphysics into questions that will guard the openness of our symbol worlds today." (I think Cox is wrong in his historical judgment that such thinkers as Aristotle and St. Thomas thought of their own work as "intellectual systems" which might "integrate whole cultural periods." Neither Aristotle nor Aquinas had much success among their contemporaries, and their work presents to the serious student today a record of tentative, dialectical, constantly changing forays into uncharted areas.) But the main point is that Cox now sees metaphysics as a critical enterprise, as the raising of further questions, as the dialectical exploding of presuppositions. The metaphysical impulse is the question-raising impulse.

Moreover, I would like to point out that the empirical ground which allows men to conceive of the "absolute future" or of an "open future" is precisely the human ability to ask ever future questions. The point of the expression "absolute future" or "open future" is that such a future cannot be conceived merely as a projection from present conditions; for a merely projected future is limited and does not represent the complete realization of historical possibility. Man is gifted with an imagination and a skeptical attitude which makes it possible for him to *alter* the conditions of the future, to *change* the world. Consequently, the human animal "transcends" even his own empirical projections: he calls them into question.

How, then, does a man know *now* that his authentic goal is the absolute future, not merely a projection? He cannot envisage an absolute future; all he can envisage is the projected future. He knows that his goal is the absolute future because he recognizes in himself a capacity to change direction, to shift his presuppositions, to imagine new alternatives: in short, to raise limitless series of questions. Right now, this minute, a man can become aware, at least indirectly, of the profundity and limitless resourcefulness of his drive to ask questions. There is no point in history at which he can imagine himself refusing to ask questions, surrendering his capacity to imagine, project, and break out anew. The ground of the conception of the absolute future is man's unrestricted drive to ask questions, his relentless openness.

This is the point of the question—a traditional one—put to the Marxists at the Salzburg Colloquy by J. B. Metz: "Will the realization of the total man give the final answer to man's questions, or will man, when fully developed, be still more the questioner, more capable still of an ever-expanding future? Will the future be filled with questions which exceed and transcend our projects and our tentative notions of the future? This would in no way contradict the autonomy of the human race since it is this openness to the future which constitutes the very essence of man."

Without the drive to ask questions, revolution, reform and progress are inconceivable. In order for a revolution to be launched, men must question the present and diagnose it; question other possible alternatives and imagine a new world; raise questions in others until a new community takes shape; and question alternative strategies and tactics for realizing the new against the inertia of the old. A theology of revolution depends at each step



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon the relentlessness and the skills of the drive to ask questions. Of course, it is not enough to ask questions; one must also make decisions and, above all, act. But it is useful to notice the fundamental role of question-asking in intelligent social and political action.

Moreover, it seems to me that the drive to ask questions is at one and the same time the source of man's openness to God and the source of social and political change. In brief, there is a startling unity between language about God and language about social and political reforms. The human drive to ask questions constitutes the openness which allows men to transcend the present, and gives rise to both languages. To think of the drive to understand as the generator of religious language is, of course, continuous with some strands of tradition; but it is mature to recognize one's continuity with the past.

What is new is the suddenly acquired power of men to change their environment, both natural and institutional. Whereas in earlier days the panorama of human life seemed to confirm that there is nothing new under the sun, nowadays the pace and scope of change are so obvious that someone might plausibly wonder whether there is anything stable. In a world now conceived as a bundle of loose ends, open to the most surprising, contingent, and unpredictable developments—a world of probabilities rather than of certainties—man's sense of responsibility for his values, his actions, and even his survival has become a sign much more cogent as an image of God than the ancient sense of dependence on the God of the ordered cosmos.

In short, theology grows out of reflection upon actual human experience in the world. The experience which captivates the imagination of our age is the experience of change, the move toward further frontiers, the hope of a human brotherly world civilization. In *every* human experience, the language of transcendence is available to men because the human drive to raise questions is present in every experience. It is not necessary to kick the faces of those who preceded us in order to speak of transcendence in our own way. When Heidegger used the language of anxiety and concern, he spoke to the experience of a dying civilization. The God spoken of as *will be* happens to speak more clearly to us, but we are not, except momentarily, at the apex of the human race.

Recognizing that fact, we do not think of God as one on whom we "depend" but rather as one who eludes our attempt to speak adequately of him, even as he eluded the clutches of our ancestors. Taking up our daily, concrete responsibilities, we cannot be sure that we hold God in our hands. Like the atheist, we work in darkness regarding God. But we accept the symbol of the community of truth, freedom, love and justice bequeathed us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and interpret our labors in its light. If we are correct, God is the one who is now with us without revealing himself magically, and the one who, in the absolute future, will be all in all.

**THE GREAT LADY BUSINESS**

# THE STAGE

What does it take to become a Great Lady of the Stage? After long and prayerful contemplation of Helen Hayes and Mary Martin, Mary Martin and Helen Hayes, I confess myself stumped. The obvious explanation—that they both did something distinguished back in the dawn of history and have been hanging on grimly ever since—does not really satisfy. For these amiable ladies are not majestic ruins, like whatshername. On the contrary, they are strikingly well-preserved; in fact, they give a rather eerie impression of being in their primes.

Miss Hayes is probably the simpler of the two to fathom. She appears (professionally, at least) to be a placid, sentimental soul who, now that she is Queen, seldom bothers to stir herself to any great peaks of interpretation. A little sweetness, a little gush, and home to beddy-byes.

But Miss Martin cannot so easily be accounted for. She works like a stevedore and she has high professional standards. Yet the results are consistently colorless. Outside of looking cheerful (which by me is no virtue) there is nothing she does outstandingly well. She cannot sing with Merman or dance with Verdon or act with Barbara Harris —or even just plain stick in your mind, with anybody.

Her current performance in "I Do, I Do" is absolutely standard. She is cheerful and willing, courteous, loyal and helpful—but of Bernard Shaw's "divine spark," there is not one flicker. The audience showers her with love and hope—look at the First Lady doing actual dance steps, hear the First Lady sing—but the glow she gives obligingly back is good health and a nice disposition, not glamour or top-drawer talent.

The first scenes of "I Do, I Do" give one all too much time to ponder these and any other questions that may occur to you. Miss Martin and Robert Preston (who really has got a kind of Smokey-the-Bear talent) clank through a sequence of truly bone-crushing banality—the fears and raptures of a young couple on their wedding night, a sequence that needs to be done at lightning speed, if at all, but which is done here at a nightmare crawl.

The story providing the excuse for all this merriment is Jan de Hartog's "The Four-poster"—a yarn you can hardly have escaped, since it turns up like a pumpkin ghost, disguised now as a book, now as a play, now as a movie, etc. By now, the audience should be able to recite the lines with the actors in a spirit of true *agape* and total theater.

After the disastrous opening, the show begins the long, slow climb to mediocrity. There are some bright musical numbers, featuring Preston's famous lunge and some suitable tunes by Harvey Schmidt to lunge to. At worst, Preston and Martin are reliable performers who know the



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

right moves—about No. Nine on a good vaudeville bill. It is just this Great Lady business I don't understand—but let that pass, perhaps.

One of the pleasant aspects of a show like this is that you can calibrate your tolerance to it pretty exactly in advance. If you are a pushover for the whimsical ups and downs of marriage, the small heartaches and triumphs, you will find an exhaustive rendition of every last up and every cotton-picking down. If you believe, however, that the less said about that stuff the better, that we get enough whimsy in the home, and that what we want in the theater is plenty of good pain and misery, better not mess with "I Do, I Do." (*At the 46th St. Theater*)

Since I have reviewed "My Sweet Charlie" elsewhere, it would be double jeopardy for me to jump on it again. As I write this, it appears to be in process of dissolution anyway, and this is fair enough—it is one of those mild, toothless affairs which seems to be tackling a big problem (white and black in the South) but isn't really tackling it at all. It turns out to be a parable, and we already know the parable. But "Charlie" does boast a pleasing performance by Leon Gossett (one of those sound, unassertive actors who doesn't make headlines and doesn't botch roles) and this should be recorded in light pencil before the whole thing is forgotten forever. (*At the Longacre*)

WILFRID SHEED

**ILLUSION AND REALITY**

# THE SCREEN

Michelangelo Antonioni, the great Italian director who seems to be obsessed with man's fruitless search for certainty, has come up with another of his brilliant studies in ambiguity. Made in London where most of his characters speak English—of sorts—"Blow-Up" also differs from Antonioni's films of the past few years in that Monica Vitti is not in it and the main character is a man. (Vanessa Redgrave gets top star billing, although she appears, and very effectively, in only a few scenes.) This young hero, or anti-hero, is a photographer whose pictures include high fashion stuff and shots of grim reality as well as idyllic poetry. It is interesting and no doubt significant that the scriptwriters, Antonioni and Tonino Guerra, made their leading character one of those typical photographers who use people but have no feeling for them, who think they're divinely appointed, and who ruthlessly shove people around saying, "I'm only doing my job. I'm a photographer!" Young David Hemmings plays the role to perfection—at work and at play as he screams at his models and treats them contemptuously, as he races around town in his Rolls, strips the panty hose off a couple of teenage hopeful-models and has a wacky romp with them before kicking them out of his studio, and as he photographs Vanessa with a middle-aged man while they lovingly cavort like youngsters in the park and then cheats her by not giving her the negatives even after she offers herself.

But "Blow-Up" is also about photography as well as about this young and very successful photographer. David wonders why disturbed Vanessa, whom he does not know at all, comes to his studio and is so anxious to get the negatives. And in the film's most suspenseful scenes, magnificently directed by Antonioni, David develops the pictures, enlarges them, fiddles around with them—until he sees more than a man and woman making love passes and frolicking in the park. Is that hand in the bushes holding a gun? Is that a body on the ground in one of the later pictures? And does David care?

Among the many statements Antonioni makes about today's cynical and decadent young people is that they're so confused about themselves they can't help each other. When the mistress (Sarah Miles) of the artist next door comes to David for help, he has no answers. And when David goes to tell a friend about the murder, he finds him too far gone at a marihuana party. David, himself, lingers at the party; and when he returns to the park next morning to have another look at the corpse he saw last night, it is gone. Antonioni often inserts a touch of mystery in his films, but in "Blow-Up," he goes the farthest—all of which heightens the apprehension we already feel about his characters' misbehavior. And all of which is in contrast to the first-rate color photography of Carlo Di Palma who makes London look more beautiful than it ever has before—whether it be the shots of the leafy, green park, Carnaby Street at night, old mews houses, or the stunning, modern gay interior of David's studio.

David Hemmings, by the way, looks so much like Terence Stamp (especially Stamp as blond Billy Budd) that the resemblance is disturbing, but as the movie continues, one becomes interested in this irresponsible young man and his concern about the murder. And at the finale, when David discovers the corpse missing from the park and starts to leave the site, he watches a group of reveling clowns, two of whom are playing tennis with an imaginary tennis ball. He notes the glee of the players and their buffoon audience; when the players' invisible ball comes near him and they all expect him to throw it back, he does. Then suddenly he realizes not everything in life is visible and a subject for his camera. Was the corpse there or wasn't it? One doesn't have to see the soul to believe in it. His face is beautifully illuminated at this point—and perhaps the young man will be changed by his experience. But whether or not he is, Antonioni has pushed us into thinking about today's youth. This provocative director has said, "I am concerned with telling the story, not solving the problem." And in "Blow-Up," he tells a fascinating and disturbing story. He does for the movies what Pirandello did for the stage and asks, "What is truth?"

PHILIP T. HARTUNG



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOOKS

## *'A whopping error, but impressive achievement'*

***The Making of Americans***

GERTRUDE STEIN

*Something Else, $10.95*

***An Anecdoted Typography of Chance***

DANIEL SPOERRI

*Something Else, $5.00*

**RICHARD KOSTELANETZ**

For some three years, the Something Else Press has accomplished what every avant-garde publisher should — issue books that all other houses would reject at first sight—and for this reason, it is clearly the heir to that tradition of way-out publishing once sustained for so long by New Directions and then briefly by Grove Press. Only a few of their twenty-odd books and pamphlets have been reviewed; even fewer are available in bookstores. Nonetheless, aided by a steady demand from university libraries and its owner's modest inheritance, Something Else thrives on looking elsewhere, forecasting even more preposterous books than the two reviewed here, Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* and Daniel Spoerri's *An Anecdoted Typography of Chance*.

Stein's novel, let me say at the outset, is an underground American classic—one of those mammoth, interminable, impossible works that every great American artist foists upon the world. *The Making of Americans* is the equivalent of Herman Melville's *Clarel*, Charles Ives' unfinished *Universe Symphony* (with its orchestra and choir of thousands), Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, Walt Whitman's *The Leaves of Grass*—the sort of work of art that nobody would attempt until an American does it.

By critical standards, *The Making of Americans* is at once a whopping error and yet an enormously impressive achievement, revealing a high integrity of conception, an uncompromising execution, a sustained style, and a distinct originality that keeps its eccentric luster to this day. Originally published here in 1926 and abridged a decade later, *The Making of Americans* was actually written soon after Gertrude Stein arrived in Paris, between 1905 and 1908, about the time that Picasso initiated the modern revolution in painting and long before the epochal fictions of James Joyce, Marcel Proust and William Faulkner. As literary art, *The Making of Americans* represents a huge break with nineteenth-century fictional conventions, a break probably far larger than any other writer of fiction (certainly any other American), except perhaps Alfred Jarry, had achieved at that time.

Yet, precisely because it is incredibly repetitious and impossible to read—indeed, monstrously boring, even for the dogged—*The Making of Americans* belongs very much in that distinctly modern tradition of art that implies more than it is—works that suggest questions and/or implications that are more important than their intrinsic achievement. Stein's announced attempt to create a universally valid typology of human character collapses completely, as the unswaying prose grinds down the reader's attempts at character differentiation.

Instead, I would suggest that the novel is implicitly about the possibility of adapting the musical principle of theme and variation to the writing of prose. Here each word functions as an individual note would in music: "There is always then repeating, always everything is repeating, this is a history of every kind of repeating there is in living, this is then a history of every kind of living." The passage, along with many others, would suggest that words cannot be surrogates for notes; even reading aloud fails to make the language more effective. Nonetheless, with a relentlessness that strikes me once again as characteristically American, Stein experiments with this idea through many of the book's 925 large pages.

Repetition is probably used in order to make an individual word attain a connotative significance it does not have alone; and this aesthetic principle also has its analogies in music—not with the music of the Renaissance but with Gregorian chant and Indian music. However, this experiment too seems a total bust, for Stein's words do not, for me at least, transcend their denotative selves; however, in *Melanctha* (1909), where the technique is more tastefully employed, the language is more successful. Also, some years later, Ernest Hemingway, as Frank O'Connor noted, exploited this principle even more effectively:

" 'You oughtn't to ever do anything too long.' "

" 'No, we were up there too long.' "

" 'Too damn long,' " John said. " 'It's no good doing a thing too long.' "

In retrospect, the tradition of art that implies more than it is, invariably passes on imaginative ideas to more consummate artists. Finally, what Stein's language fails to achieve is Joyce's multiple resonance (perfected particularly in *Finnegans Wake*) which she envied then and which we also value more highly today: and this is perhaps because she drew her aesthetic models from archaic examples. That is, where her prose emulates the music of the nineteenth century and earlier, Joyce's technique in some ways corresponds to contemporary serial procedures, such as Milton Babbitt's principle of "combinatoriality."

To my mind, the real achievement of *The Making of Americans* lies in the creation of an indefinite sense of space, where people are peculiarly detached from their surroundings and each other, where characters are not particularly affected by their environment, where people and relationships are continually in flux, where dates and places are unspecific, and where time is more spatial than successive. The result is very cubist in style: as cubist painting in one glance captures several aspects of the same object, so time is so



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flattened in this novel (overcoming the linear plot of a family saga) that all the actions seem to take place at one time.

I cannot think of an earlier American novel that embodies this sense of space; yet it informs such subsequent works as William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and *Absalom, Absalom*, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Ernest Hemingway's "The Killers," William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Thomas Pynchon's *V*. It is a sense of fictional space that is singularly American, perhaps because, as Stein perceived in her retrospective lecture on her novel (reprinted in *Lectures in America*), it is indigenous to American life. In this sense, more than any other, the book is less about the American family, as most critics have suggested, than the making of America's rhythms.

In contrast, Daniel Spoerri's *An Anecdoted Typography of Chance* is very European—highly self-conscious, smoothly finished, smugly ironical. Spoerri is a Rumanian-born (1930) French neo-Dadaist who was represented in the Museum of Modern Art's Assemblage show with *Kishka's Breakfast*, a wall-mounting of a breakfast tray. Spoerri espouses the idea that "art" is anything that artists do; and where he once stamped ordinary groceries "Caution: Work of Art" (and then sold them at their original foodstore prices), so in New York a few years ago his gallery formally exhibited the actual room he vacated at the Chelsea Hotel.

In this book, Spoerri itemizes all the junk on his work-write-eating table at a certain time, remembering how he acquired each item and all the thoughts it brings to his head. Since Spoerri and his translator, Emmet Williams, who added his own notes, are both endowed with capacities for irony and humor, the result is generally amusing. However, where the book fulfills its intention of pursuing Robbe-Grillet's objectivist principles to more extreme ends, it still lacks that mad imaginative ambition and noble defectiveness that makes *The Making of Americans* such a more significant work.

## *Letters of C. S. Lewis*

W. H. LEWIS, EDITOR

*Harcourt, Brace & World, $5.95*

**CHRISTOPHER E. MULVEY**

Warren Lewis has published a collection of the letters written by that kindly Christian, his brother Clive Staples Lewis. The letters begin with those of boyhood and take us up to within a month of that sad week in November, 1963, in which C. S. Lewis and John F. Kennedy died. It is not easy to say, immediately, who was the greater man.

This selection of letters has been chosen to make us know the human being; not to paint the portrait without warts. The picture is that of a self-effacing scholar, pedestrian in his habits and pleasures, brilliant in his conversations and writings, capable of unusual warmth of friendship, and finally, possessed in his last years of magnificent spiritual strength.

It is probably his capacity for friendship which makes him such a fine writer of letters. A group of friends often referred to in them were the Inklings. The Inklings formed a club which met every Thursday night in Lewis' rooms at Magdalen College, Oxford. Apart from Lewis himself, there were J. R. R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams, John Wain, C. L. Wrenn. These men valued conversation as a skill; as that great social art of the eighteenth century. We are given a reflection of those enviable evenings in the letters that Lewis writes to his brother.

His letters are filled with the delightful esoterica of scholarly reading; such as that St. Francis de Sales claims "hares turn white in the winter because they eat nothing but snow (used as an argument for frequent Communion)" or that "Henry VII had some mastiffs hanged for fighting a lion: said they were rebeling against their natural sovereign. That's the stuff. Also he had his own hawk decapitated for fighting an eagle."

The most affecting letters are those written about his wife, Joy Gresham—she was an American, a Jew who had become a convert to Christianity, largely through his influence. He found in her, at the end of his life, a companionship which he had not before found in woman. In her, he found a mind as elastic and rich as his own. A real heroism of love is seen in this marriage, for as he writes to a friend just before the wedding, "I wish you would pray very hard for a lady called Joy Gresham and me. I am likely v. shortly to be both a bridegroom and a widower, for she has cancer." They were married in 1956, and she died in 1960. That she would live so long as four years as his wife was unexpected, but their relationship was a strength to them through its honesty and love. He writes to Sister Penelope, C.S.M.V., in 1957, "She knows her own state of course; I would allow no lies to be told to a grown-up and a Christian." After her death his letters are filled with sorrow but no bitterness.

Warren Lewis' introductory memoir to this book is the best of its kind that I have ever read. He reviews his brother's work, life at Oxford, friendships and loves with a candor that is a higher form of praise than panegyric. He criticizes his brother's attitude toward their father (of which there is full evidence in the letters), and his morbidly sensitive memories of adolescence (Lewis always referred to his prep school as Belsen). He gives a very just appraisal of Lewis' development from agnosticism to Christianity, concluding, "His 'churchmanship' could not be labeled."

C. S. Lewis is shown in this memoir and his letters to be a man of quixotic conservatism (" 'Dynamic' I think is one of the words invented by this age which sums up what it likes and I abominate.

## REVIEWERS

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ edited *The New American Arts* (Horizon).

CHRISTOPHER E. MULVEY is studying for a doctorate in English at Columbia.

MARY F. DALY teaches in the theology department at Boston College.

RICHARD M. ELMAN is the author of *The Poorhouse State: The American Way of Life on Public Assistance* (Pantheon).

LINDA VICTORIA LIPNACK is presently working on a study of Iris Murdoch.

MEL MENDELSSOHN is Assistant to the President at New York City Community College.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Could one start a Stagnation Party—?") and a man whose central source of inspiration was the "Joy" of Christianity (but a Joy that could at times become more akin to glee: "When you die, and if 'prison visiting' is allowed, come down and look me up in Purgatory. It is all rather fun—solemn fun—isn't it?") but above all the book shows C. S. Lewis to be a man capable of great friendship, and finally, great love.

## *Between Faith and Thought*

RICHARD KRONER

*Oxford U. Press, $4.95*

**MARY F. DALY**

The title of Professor Kroner's book reveals the nature of the problem which he sets out to examine, that of the relation between faith and speculation. If the reader is disappointed at not finding here a brilliant new synthesis, his disappointment will be his own fault, for the author gives enough warning signals. The book is, by his own admission, a series of loosely connected essays. Its thesis is that "we must accept both (revelation and speculation) and reconcile one to the other." The task, he says, "must be done by a critical philosophy of faith which is also critical toward speculation." He maintains that speculation cannot do the job; critical philosophy alone, as inaugurated by Kant, can deal with the non-conceptual realms. The philosopher who studies revelation, however, should also be a man of faith.

Although the book manifests erudition and sincerity, it does not represent a significant breakthrough in the philosophy of religion. Professor Kroner's frequently uncritical use of language suggests the reason for this failure. The following sentence, for example, is placidly offered as a statement of fact: "Man is an animal, but he is also the child of God." Excusable in a Sunday sermon, such a remark when found in a philosophical work suggests a quaint lack of sensitivity to contemporary thought.

The problem of the author's noncontemporaneity is most in evidence in his treatment of "faith." One wishes that he had profited from Tillich's analysis of the distortions of faith, or that he had gotten the message which is behind all the discussion about the end of theism. Since the repeated objection of modern thinkers that the "faith" of many is merely a crutch goes unheeded by Professor Kroner, he finds it possible to offer such a statement as the following: "We have to believe that the distress, the misery, the destruction are part and parcel of a universal plan and that they lose their negative features only in an over-all panoramic vista of world and life."

Why do we *have* to believe this? One thinks of the breakthroughs being made by such theologians as Rahner, Cox, and Dewart, who suggest in various contexts that religion must learn to break its ties with a rigid teleology and with a paralyzing belief in a fixed plan being worked out in history. The suggestion that faith is a crutch fulfilling man's psychological needs occurs repeatedly in the book. For example: "It establishes in our hearts that poise and calm which we utterly need." Again, "faith in a supreme and eternal guarantor of meaning" helps us to "bear the defects of meaning in which our world and life abound." Most devastating of all is his description of the religious man: "He is, as it were, born an authoritarian or a submitter."

The way in which Professor Kroner poses problems suggests the reason for his inability to come to grips with them: "How can we believe that this world of ours is created by a benevolent and omnipotent God? Daily life and history unite contradicting such a revealed truth." This question illustrates what he means by the "definite tensions between the two polarities" of revelation and logical speculation. Not surprisingly, he opts for the primacy of "faith." But we must ask whether faith necessarily implies belief in that eternal and omnipotent God whom countless of our contemporaries have felt constrained to reject. For all his erudition, Professor Kroner writes of "revealed truth" as if it were a package thrown at men long ago, once and for all. By way of contrast, we might think of Leslie Dewart's suggestion that God's "omnipotence" might come to mean something different to man's evolving consciousness; that is, that the world is totally open to God and therefore totally open to future creation by man—that with God all things are possible to man."

In the introduction to his book, Professor Kroner wrote: "I have always guessed that there was a peculiar *concordia discors,* a paradoxical unity between these two poles (of faith and thought)." In his book he communicates some valuable insights, e. g., in the chapters on spiritual imagination and on death and resurrection, and this is probably justification enough for having written the book. However, a creative philosophy of religion will have to do better than gaze wistfully at the "two poles." A first necessary step toward reconciliation will be the abandonment of the sterile, non-existential notion of faith which is at least implicitly operative in this book.

## *Our Children Are Dying*

NAT HENTOFF

*Viking, $4.50*

## *The Children of the South*

MARGARET ANDERSON

*Farrar, Straus, $4.95*

**RICHARD M. ELMAN**

*Our Children are Dying* is the expanded text of a *New Yorker* report on a segregated school in which enlightened professionals have made compassionate efforts to create an atmosphere and a practice through which Negro children could "achieve" against the odds imposed by poverty, caste, and community indifference. It is also an admiring profile of Dr. Elliot Shapiro, the school's principal, a man of convincing dedication, intelligence, and energy who truly seems to believe that the children in his school can be taught, but who has been subsequently forced to leave New York.

For, as the title suggests, there are failures daily: many never reach their potentials; some are doomed to become tomorrow's "social deviants." The story



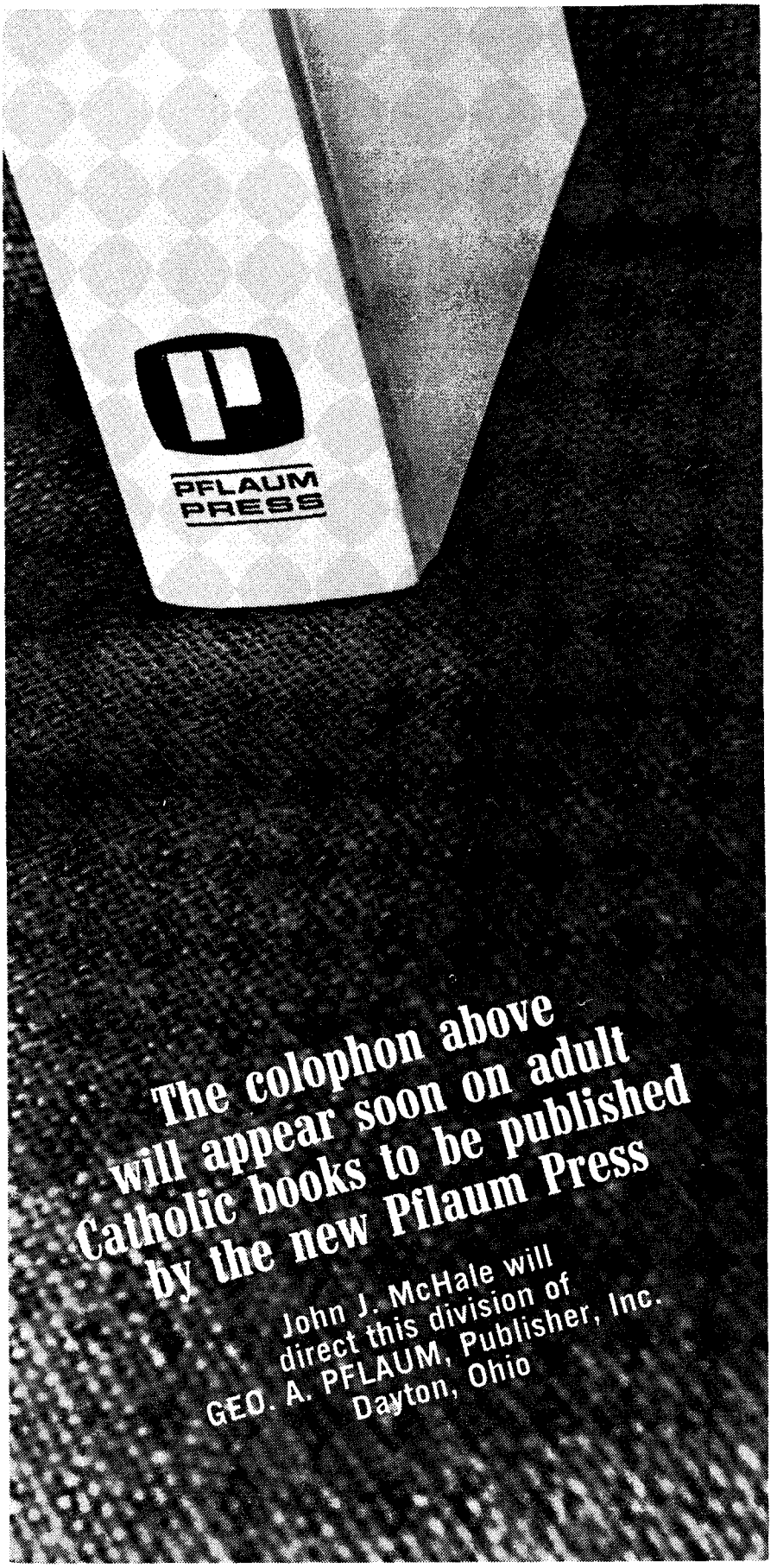
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which Hentoff informally narrates about P.S. 119 (now P.S. 92) is of the imposing disabilities which a heritage of the most abject economic necessity has imposed upon the children and of the efforts of a talented few to countervail, some by using highly sophisticated psychoanalytic methods, others by fairness, discipline, and compassion.

Because the plight of such children has been further aggravated by their agonizing sense of caste, by the staggering ease and abundance of the world outside their ghetto, and by the deadening dislocations of family and place which have been their experience, it is refreshing to learn that Shapiro and his staff have served as agitators and advocates among the poor, as well as pedagogues, and it is rather impressive to see how the Harlem community has lent its support to such efforts, how eager its children have been to learn, as a consequence, and how many do succeed (approximately twenty percent expect to enter college); but it is also a terrible comment on our increasingly unjust and unequal society that the penalties for school failure should be so severe: a life without work or dignity—perhaps even a life on Welfare. One wonders when in our history has so much been asked of so many at such scant discomfort to just about everybody else and at such great risk to themselves.

Dr. Elliot Shapiro's efforts to save lives is taking place in the segregated North. In Clinton, Tennessee desegregation has been in effect since 1956 and *The Children of the South* is the report of Clinton school guidance counselor and teacher Margaret Anderson on how it has been working out. In general, this is an optimistic document, although Clinton in the beginning had to contend with racist John Kaspar, the White Citizen's Council, and the dynamiting of its high school.

But one reason may be that Clinton was predominantly a white area and that those few Negroes who chose to take the risk of entering the all-white school were strongly motivated to achieve. Mrs. Anderson is very informative about the effects which desegregation has had on the lives of Negro and white students. She observes, for example, that her Negro students seem to show a gift for






LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

languages; and she is moderate and intelligent about the ramifications which desegregation has had for the Clinton community in general. Mrs. Anderson also holds out the hope that, ultimately, the South may be a better place for Negroes and Whites to live together in productive harmony than in the great cities of the North, East, and Midwest, but one reason for this will be—if, indeed, it ever happens—that the Negro masses have increasingly removed themselves from the South already, making the possibilities of those with the endurance to remain behind a little more recognizable.

And, of course, these Negro masses have found their way to places like Harlem, to schools like those of Elliot Shapiro, making it possible for fine liberal school teachers like Margaret Anderson to quiet the fears of her white neighbors that they will be defeated by the educated talents of the Southern Negro. It's all really a parody of liberal self-righteousness: "segregation" in the North and "desegregation" in the South; Margaret Anderson unwittingly congratulating herself for having helped to create Harlem, and Harlem's Negroes bitter about the North and, occasionally, nostalgic for the South.

But the joke will, inevitably, be at the expense of the white and the black man everywhere in this country unless we are willing to find the means of providing literally thousands of men and women of the caliber of Elliot Shapiro to teach the needy black children of Harlem; and the blacker such men are the better; and the less needy the children are the better too.

But, even then, the problem may still remain grotesque: since even Hentoff admits that such talents may be rather inimitable, it is probably also necessary to reduce the costs of failure by every conceivable economic and social technique, including the restraining of some of our growing number of elites. Whether that will square with the *noblesse oblige* of the white South or the white North, of people like Mr. Secretary Gardner, or, for that matter, Ralph McGill or Mrs. Anderson, is worth considering: thus far, at Clinton High School, she has been dealing with the deserving poor whereas people like Elliot Shapiro have never permitted themselves the luxury to be so discriminating.

## *The Time of the Angels*

IRIS MURDOCH

*Viking, $5*

**LINDA VICTORIA LIPNACK**

*The Time of the Angels* is Iris Murdoch's latest metaphysical fairy tale, and, but for *The Italian Girl*, her gravest violation of reality. Like her own Hugo Belfounder who pursued "the astonishing, delightful, complicated and mysterious" in *Under the Net*, Iris Murdoch has settled for negligible details. The flamboyancy and extravagance that once seemed ingenious, at the very least original, now appear predictable and stale. *The Time of the Angels* emerges as a tarnished romance of the eccentric.

Miss Murdoch uses her familiar Gothic decor, this time a ravaged Victorian rectory. But the atmosphere that is supposed to suggest black magic, enchantment, conspiracy and violence, remains ordinary, confusing rather than half-revealing and eerie. The frequently mentioned yellow fog never quite entombs the rectory. The recurrent "subterranean growl of a train" that shakes the house calls attention to itself as a clever allusion to a vengeful Lucifer.

Miss Murdoch tries to make a grotesque arrangement of characters in a macabre setting. Her assumption, that anything can be revealed about anyone, is her challenge to Sartre's concept of freedom as a committal to action, the behaviorist's theory that we are what we do, and the linguist's faith in what can be communicated. Miss Murdoch wants to convey the impression of reality as contingent and impenetrable. She wants to link the characters within the interstices of each other's fantasies to show us how complicated morality is, how mysterious we are to one another, and how we so rarely succeed in apprehending others as separate and unique.

Yet however "infinitely extensible" and "irreducibly dissimilar" Miss Murdoch may have intended her characters to be, they do not work their magic in her design. They may sound bizarre, but, in fact, they remain earthbound, disparate and inconsequential. Carel Fisher is too erratic and enigmatic to be convincing as either a renegade rector or an uncanny God. His supposedly adopted niece, Elizabeth, is too vague to be a sleeping beauty and too shallow to be transfixed by a religious vision. We do not believe in Pattie O'Driscoll's worship of Carel, for she never exists beyond her "*cappuccino*" hue, "dark reddish eyes," and Irish-Jamaican illegitimacy. Marcus, Carel's brother, and Muriel, Carel's daughter, are awkwardly petrified by a guilty father-lover image. Carel and Elizabeth may enchant the characters within the novel, but they cannot enchant us.

This fundamental weakness of character construction is disastrous. Miss Murdoch depends upon suspense, tension and shock to keep the reader fascinated by the wheel of fortune. Yet the accumulation of arbitrary events seems pointless. The novel has no inner necessity. Many of the events and their implications only sound exciting in outline. For example, Carel recites a sacrilegious version of the Hail Mary as he disrobes Pattie; through a peephole, we discover him making love to Elizabeth who turns out to be his daughter; in the midst of a philosophic exegesis, he slaps Marcus; eventually he commits suicide.

Yet there is no momentum to keep us in the author's grip. Furthermore, the reader who is familiar with "Murdochian" lore will anticipate the suggestions of homosexuality and the introduction of incest. He will also be disappointed by discoveries made through perfunctory confessions instead of through unexpected turns in the plot which the novel continuously promises.

## *The United States in the Postwar World*

JAMES P. WARBURG

*Atheneum, $6.50*

**MEL MENDELSSOHN**

James P. Warburg, veteran writer, lec-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turer, and commentator on world affairs, has given us another brilliant analysis of American foreign policy blunders in the postwar period. A long and distinguished official and quasi-official career makes his comments and recommendations worthy of more attention than he admits they have received for many a year in Washington.

In this short book (his thirtieth), Warburg traces our retrogression from Roosevelt's policy of conciliation to an essentially "big stick" diplomacy exercised by the Truman-Byrnes-Forrestal and Eisenhower-Dulles cabals. He found some momentary relief in Kennedy's "rational realism," aimed at making the world "safe for diversity," but now despairs that Lyndon Johnson has taken up the cudgels for the anti-Communist crusade that oversimplifies and distorts the national interest.

What is it in our tradition that leads us down this path to neo-colonialism, alienates those we seek to befriend, and erodes the avowed democratic process that is supposed to be our strength? What is the source of the "semi-altruistic paternalism" that we transmute into authority for global custodianship?

Mr. Warburg finds his answer in the nature and experience of United States foreign policy-makers:

"All of them belonged or belong to the nearest thing there is to an American aristocracy. Before they became public servants, some were lawyers with international reputations; some were bankers or directors of railroads and large corporations. Most of them had connections with their counterparts in European countries. Without exception, they were graduates of Ivy League universities, Europe-oriented and not particularly well informed about other parts of the world. Most of them were or are men who can talk easily to the ruling groups in other countries but are less at ease and less well acquainted with the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in their own country or in other parts of the world. Generally speaking, they are urbane, progressive-minded conservatives, neither radical nor reactionary."

With these credentials, how could these men be anything more than missionaries for "The American Way of Life," namely, "the business of America is business"? More pointedly, Warburg cites considerable evidence that our entire German policy was the result of "strong ties" between the American banking and business community and interests in German industry, noting further that Secretary of State Dulles had indeed "represented a number of German concerns in the United States." In this context, what Mr. Warburg does not explain is his own magical metamorphosis after an early career on Wall Street.

Admitting the centrality of these economic concerns of the American foreign policy "establishment," we must nevertheless deal with the totality of policy considerations, for is it not in the interest of business to promote a peaceful international milieu? On this score, Warburg plunges us into the maelstrom of religious and philosophical values. Winston Churchill's "iron curtain" speech, Warburg finds, laid down the ground rules for the cold war. Calling upon "Christian civilization" to engage in an anti-Communist crusade (which might, incidentally, preserve the disintegrating British Empire!), Churchill found fertile soil in Harry Truman's fundamentalist willingness to accept a "devil theory" for the postwar world crisis. Unfortunately, this simplistic "good vs. evil" analysis of the balance of world power remains the keystone of U.S. foreign policy.

"Containment" of Communism, rather than response and accommodation to the existence of Soviet, and later Chinese, power, has been nurtured by both Democratic and Republican administrations. The essential needs of emerging nations in a rapidly changing world have been lost in the shuffle. In our psychotic preoccupation with the "Communist menace," we have lost sight of the economic and social inequities throughout the world, violated international accords, and subverted the democratic process we claim to promote, both at home and abroad. Ironically, the legalistic-moralistic devices we constructed to contain Communism have only embroiled us further in foreign adventures not always related to the national interest and helped to "create" Communists when we our-


**Erica thought the rosary was as *passé* as the Italian hair-do. Then she discovered the Scriptural Rosary and says it's as sophisticated as straight hair.**

THE Scriptural Rosary is an updated version of the way the rosary was once prayed throughout Western Christendom in the Middle Ages. It provides ten short scriptural quotations for each decade of the rosary. You read, or recite, one quotation before each Hail Mary. These ten "points of meditation" tell the story of the mystery as you pray each decade.

People who have prayed the Scriptural Rosary say the little mind-stirring quotations that you read before each Hail Mary make continuous meditation upon the mysteries much easier than ever before.

Send for the 80 p. book ($1 postpaid). Or send for the Scriptural Rosary record set produced by The Catholic University of America (set of two records, $7 ppd.)

**Scriptural Rosary Center**
**6 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago 60602**
*Please send me the* ☐ *$1 book (postpaid)*
☐ *$7 record set (ppd.)*
*I enclose $_____. Bill me later . . .* ☐
*Name*_____
*Address*_____
_____ ZIP_____




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves ignored them, as in the Dominican intervention and, of course, Vietnam.

John Foster Dulles, in his passion for the superiority of Western "spiritual values," went to his grave convinced that the Soviet and Chinese Communist regimes would crumble from within. By encircling both giants with "paper tiger" military alliances, he hoped to sweat out this inevitability, while fully prepared for nuclear exchange in the event of a direct confrontation. We have not come far enough from Dulles' "brinksmanship," although Mr. Warburg finds cause for optimism in John Kennedy's "break with the past" and the ever more vocal minority he inspired.

In the face of continued "establishment" control of foreign policy machinery, it is difficult to agree with Warburg's assertion that the "new generation" can sustain or increase the Kennedy momentum. "Identification with the underprivileged," "a sense of participation," "a new impetus toward public service"—these are the hallmarks of those who dissent and thereby, within the terms of the Johnson "consensus," disqualify themselves from participation in the "democratic" process, while an apathetic majority deludes itself that "Big Daddy" knows best.


## Commonweal this Season

TOPICS RECENTLY PRESENTED in Commonweal articles indicate the sort of coverage this journal of opinion now provides its subscribers week after week: ending the cold war . . . . . the future of the city . . . . . the bishops and peace . . . . . economics and freedom . . . . . bombing North Vietnam . . . . . Dewart on belief . . . . . Catholics and the Chicago riots, to cite a few.

Alongside such articles are the columns of James O'Gara, Daniel Callahan, Harvey Cox, John Leo, Michael Novak, William V. Shannon, William Pfaff, Robert McAfee Brown, Philip T. Hartung (Screen) and Wilfrid Sheed (Stage), letters from our readers and perceptive analyses of current books. Most timely of all: the editorials on the latest issues of the day.

Why not try the special introductory offer and save 60% of the single-copy price?

**----------17 Issues for $2----------**

COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016.
Enclosed is $2. Please send the next 17 issues of Commonweal to:

Name .....

Address .....

City, State, Zip .....

☐ I prefer the regular full year subscription at $9. 1/13/67


# CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 391)*

to realize that President Johnson's attempts to avoid demonstrations could well have been motivated by a desire to avoid embarrassment to his Australian hosts, and the majority of Australians expressed just such embarrassment in their press.

Here's hoping that *Commonweal* some day soon will return to printing balanced and responsible political dissent.

R. A. DE GREGORIO

### *The Assassination*

Peekskill, N.Y.

*To the Editors*: I have read William V. Shannon's article in the November 18 issue titled "Enough is Enough" with interest.

Mr. Shannon says that if Lee Harvey Oswald had lived to be brought to trial the jury would only have needed to reach a verdict beyond reasonable doubt not to clear up everyone's stray doubts or reconcile odd details.

The reason for the doubts that have been expressed to such a degree that such articles as Mr. Shannon's are prompted is that to many people, perhaps a majority, the doubts are not stray doubts but are reasonable doubts.

I consider it a very reasonable doubt that the bullet which the Commission says struck President Kennedy in the back exited at the throat making an exit wound that looked like an entry wound to the only doctors that saw the wound in it's original condition and then continued on to shatter Governor Connally's rib and cause multiple injuries and emerge from Governor Connally's body in unblemished condition. This premise in its bare form with no additional opposing evidence is subject to reasonable doubt.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In addition the doctor attending Mr. Connally stated that the bullet that wounded Connally lost metal and could not have emerged unblemished. Governor Connally stated that he heard the shot that struck the President and the one the Commission says also hit Connally. This borders on the impossible. When a theory borders on the impossible it must be considered that a reasonable doubt exists. Yet I would have to write a book as many have done to relate all the Commission theories that border on the impossible. These almost impossible theories are not odd details or stray doubts; they are vital to the determination of whether more than one man was involved. If the bullet that struck Kennedy initially did not also strike Connally there were two assassins at least.

As far as Robert Kennedy's acceptance of the Commission's Report is concerned, it is evident that he was in a state of shock and the trauma is so great that even today he does not want to mention the assassination.

Mr. Shannon says a fresh inquiry might well poison the atmosphere of public life, to no useful purpose. This may well be true, and may well have been a major consideration of the Warren Commission when it undertook it's investigation, leading it to form a conclusion that would not "poison the political atmosphere" and then attempt to find and use only evidence that could be squeezed into this conclusion. The minute such considerations are used, truth is a secondary consideration and is likely to suffer.

Mr. Shannon says that most people that doubt the Commission's Report are also against the Vietnam War and they seek to hurt President Johnson. I was not aware that there was a correlation between Vietnam War dissenters and people who doubted the Warren Commission conclusions, but if it can be argued that those who are against the war wish to use the Kennedy assassination as a weapon against the President, it can then be also argued that those that support the war concur with the Commission's Report so as not to hurt the President because of their agreement with him concerning the war.

If upon study of the evidence Mr. Shannon can conclude that the Commission's conclusions match the evidence, he is free to come to that conclusion and for him the case is settled. But he has no right to expect those who cannot reconcile the Commission's conclusions with the evidence to do the same.

To some people truth is a goal that is paramount to considerations of "political atmosphere" and so long as there is evidence that the truth has not been arrived at, some men will seek it. It is not to their discredit that it may never be known. They must try. The discredit lies on those who give up the search.

ERNEST G. MARQUIS

### *Post-biblical Christianity*

Bridgeport, Conn.

*To the Editors*: Perhaps the difficulty with Daniel Callahan's question "by what norms is Scripture itself to be judged," (Post-Biblical Christianity, Dec. 9) resides in the presupposition behind the question, that Scripture is simply a thing, the book of the Bible which is placed within the community-consciousness in Faith (Tradition) of the Church here and now as its constant norm or canon, a "dialectic" in which not only the Church is judged but likewise in which the Scripture is interpreted.

It seems to me that there is yet another way of looking at the problem. Scripture is *more* than the book of the Bible. Scripture is an *event* in history, a "word-event" in which by means of the written word that consciousness is formed in faith which constitutes the living word as event.

Rather than a dialectic between separate but nevertheless related "things" (Scripture-Tradition-Magisterium) there is one personal dialogic process or movement in grace and freedom in history, *one movement of Revelation unfolding itself*, but always by means of the concrete historical moment and man's existential understanding of himself in Faith.

It is in this "Light" that the Scripture is to be judged and in the same moment as word-event we are to judge ourselves. For one does the one by doing the other.

ROBERT PALESE


**RESONANCE**

Theology in Historical Background

Fall '66 Issue

**"The Law of Celibacy"**

$1.50

Fall '65-Spring '66

Double Issue

**"Penance—Ministry of Reconciliation"**

$2.50

$3 a year, $5.50 two years

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

St. Meinrad, Indiana 47577

**HOLY CROSS BROTHERS**

TEACH AND TRAIN YOUNG MEN TO WITNESS TO CHRIST

*teaching - office work - trades*

write: HOLY CROSS BROTHERS

St. Edward's University, Room 90, Austin, TX 78704

Holy Cross High School, Room 90, Flushing, NY 11358

Holy Cross Jr. College, Rm 90, Notre Dame, IN 46556

"MAKE LOVE NOT WAR" "WITHDRAW FROM VIETNAM" "WAR SOLVES EVERYTHING—even people"

—plus 3 other peace buttons $1. *SONGS FOR PEACE* containing 100 songs of the peace movement, compiled by SPU, introduction by Pete Seeger, $2.95. STUDENT PEACE UNION, 5 Beekman St., NYC 10038, BE 3-0464.

**Vestments**

**Have yours made at DOWNSIDE**

**Write:**

**The Vestment Department**

**DOWNSIDE ABBEY**

**Bath, Somerset, England**




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Call to Clergymen—

# VIET-NAM:
# THE CLERGYMAN'S DILEMMA

## An Education-Action Mobilization

**January 31—February 1, 1967—Washington, D.C.**

Dear Friend:

Scripture warns that "where there is no vision the people perish." The failure of vision regarding Viet-Nam is a blindness to realities no less than to ideals. The threat of this moment is a preoccupation with the enemy that destroys our society's power to understand itself or its foes. In such a time *leaders* in the religious community of this nation must risk the displeasure of the powers that be in order to challenge dogmatisms that imperil ourselves and our world.

We want *you* in Washington with us on January 31–February 1 to gain new insight for *local involvement* through workshops, to meet with both elected and appointed government officials, and to stand with members of all faiths in a vigil for peace.

Dr. John C. Bennett
President, Union Theological Seminary

Rabbi Abraham Heschel
Professor, Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Father John McKenzie
Notre Dame University

Dr. Robert McAfee Brown
Professor, Stanford University

Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr.
Chaplain, Yale University

Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath
President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Bishop John Wesley Lord
Methodist Bishop of Washington, D.C.

Rabbi Jacob Weinstein
President, Central Conference of American Rabbis

Sister Mary Corita

Dr. Harvey G. Cox
Associate Professor, Harvard Divinity School

Father Joseph F. Mulligan
Dean, Graduate School, Fordham University

Father Donald Campion
Former Editor, America

Father Peter Riga
Professor, St. Mary's College

## YOU ARE WANTED!

This mobilization is sponsored by Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet-Nam—A National Emergency Committee. We intend to assist local groups in arranging chartered transportation wherever possible. If you cannot come and would like to help defray the cost of the mobilization, checks may be made payable to: "Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet-Nam."

(Institutions for identification only)

## NO ONE CAN TAKE YOUR PLACE!

*Clip out the application below and send it to us at once. We will be in touch with you immediately with more information about the Mobilization.*

**COUNT ME IN!**
**Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet-Nam**
**475 Riverside Drive**
**New York, New York 10027 212-870-2283**
**Room 560—Attention: Richard Fernandez**

**Name**_____

**Address**_____

**Home Phone**_____

**Office Phone**_____

**City**_____ **State**_____ **Zip**____

(Clip Coupon)



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED